

Fig. 1: Final section of Ullmann's donation list, dealing with "zoological objects" (Photo by Kerstin Volker-Saad).

“Anang” and “Andreas”

Provenance Research on Human Remains in Germany as a Lens on Inter-Colonial History

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Long forgotten by the general public and specialists alike, the Baroque Palace of Friedenstein in Gotha (Thuringia, Germany) houses notable Indonesian collections in its art, oriental, ethnographic, and naturalistic departments. Some Javanese weapons date back to the very beginnings of the collection as a “chamber of miracles” founded by Duke Friedrich I in the mid-17th century. Donations increased dramatically from the mid-19th century. In this period, German traders, missionaries, administrators, doctors, and military men began to participate in large numbers in the colonial expansion of the Dutch in “East India” – today’s Indonesia – in particular, in the colonization of its “outer islands” such as Sumatra, Borneo, and Sulawesi.

Among the large collections – which include ethnographic objects, oriental art, weapons, and remains of exotic animals – are 33 human skulls. After lying forgotten in museum storages for a century and a half, the provenance and history of these skulls is being studied by a multi-disciplinary, international team partly funded by the German Lost Art Foundation.¹ One of the earliest collectors to be found in the museum inventory was the “Royal Dutch Captain Ullmann,” who played a key role in sending the skulls to Friedenstein. Captain Ullmann spent close to 25 years in Sumatra, Borneo, and Java. During a home leave from his service in the Banjar War (1859-1863) in Borneo, he donated 48 items to the Duke, which entered the latter’s “Art Cabinet” on September 4, 1862. The donation comprises weapons of various types, artisanal products, articles of clothing, jewelry, and objects of everyday and religious use. Also included are several rare or historically important items, such as personal weapons of “a priest from Mecca (actually a haji), who played an important role in the murder of the Christians in Banjarmasin in the year 1859.”

According to a list written by Ullmann, most of the items are said to originate from different parts of Borneo, with a few from Sumatra. Somewhat hidden at the end of the list are four human skulls, under a special heading – “Zoological Objects” – that also includes three bottles with animal preparations in spiritus and a large skull of a Gavia Crocodile [Fig. 1]. The human skull of

Human remains occupy a very delicate position in the discussion over the future of ethnographic collections. Provenance research on the skull of a presumed Borneo rebel and murderer, whose skull was donated to Duke Ernest II of Saxe-Gotha in 1862 by a German officer in Dutch services, leads to the story of the rebel’s alleged victim. This victim was the first known casualty of the Banjar war in 1859 and Borneo’s first Christian martyr. Reduced to a “zoological object,” the rebel’s individual destiny is forgotten in the museum trajectory, much as that of the victim, who as a non-European was accorded a marginal role at best. The example can serve to provide insight into the types of questions and issues involved in researching the provenance of human remains.

are marked in China ink with numbers 42-45 and the inscription “Kapit (for “Captain”) Ullmann,” together with the sign for his military rank consisting of three points between two lines. The skulls were later mounted on wooden stands including names and some biographical information. They became part of a collection of 42 Asian “race skulls,” for the most part from Batavia hospitals. Of these 42 skulls, 33 are still present in the collection, currently in Gotha’s Perthes Forum.

For all four skulls, Ullmann’s list gives personal names and ethnic attributions. It also mentions that they belonged to murderers: two of them were said to have “participated in the murder of the Europeans,” while another “participated in the murder in the Banjarmasin area.” In addition, it is said in museum catalogues and/or on the stands that they were executed, an addition possibly provided orally by the donor.

Osteoanthropological research suggests that two of these men were decapitated, followed by their heads being exposed on stakes or poles for an extended period. This was a usual practice after executions.

The Banjar War

The expressions “murder of the Europeans” and “murder in the Banjarmasin area,” without any further explanation, suggest that the events referred to were known to the recipients. In fact, the news

23, 1859, from a correspondent at Batavia forwarded to Scottish merchants Finlay and Co.: “We have the greatest regret in informing you that we have [...] received the most disastrous tidings regarding the coal mine establishment of Kalungair,² which has, by some accounts, been entirely, by others only partly, destroyed by an insurrection among the native subjects of the Sultan of Banjarmassing;³ but, saddest of all, the whole of the European employés have been brutally murdered, without leaving one to tell the tale.” The paper goes on to explain the causes of the insurrection: Disputes on the Sultan’s legitimate succession and agitation by “Mohamedan priests” (actually hajjis) returned from Mecca. Among the 50 or 51 European victims are mentioned four German missionaries, three of their wives and a number of children. While the information so far is generally accurate, this is definitely not the case with the paper’s contention that the “cause of the insurrection proceeds in no way from dislike to the mines.” The statement is clearly meant to placate alarmed shareholders in the recently established coal mining industry. Actually, the mines were scenes in which workers – consisting largely of native debt-slaves and chain gang laborers often brought over from Java – suffered terrible brutality. Consequently, large numbers sided with the rebels and turned against their bosses during the attacks.

Along with the Dutch and indigenous mining personnel, members of the Rhenish Mission Society were attacked and killed at several stations. These German people were not collateral victims as has sometimes been claimed. Rather, the Christian mission constituted a threat to Muslim activists who came under increasingly anti-Christian influence on their pilgrimage to Mecca. Also, many Dayaks in and around the mission settlements had developed strong resentments due to violence exerted by some of the missionaries towards redeemed debt-slaves living and working in their colonies. Dutch retaliation for the initial attacks soon developed into a long and bloody conflict known as the Banjar War. With utmost cruelty on both sides, the war saw the participation of large numbers of foreign mercenaries from Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, France, and Luxemburg. Although it officially ended in 1863, resistance and “punitive expeditions” continued until 1905.

Captain Ullmann

Captain Ullmann played a crucial role in the war. Born in Pirmasens (Bavaria) in 1813, he entered the Dutch military service as a volunteer at the age of 18 and came to the Dutch East Indies in 1841 after having participated in the suppression of the Belgian uprising in 1831-1834. He fought

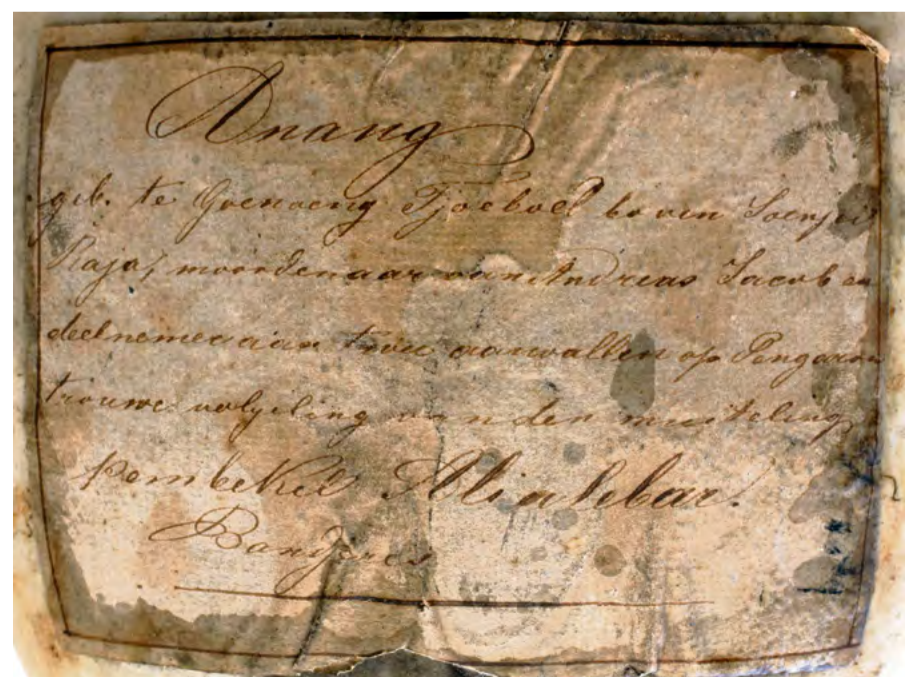


Fig. 2: Ancient label in Dutch glued on Anang's skull (Photo by the author).



Fig. 3: Memorial picture of the killed German missionaries published by the missionary society. Andreas Jacob is only represented in a vignette drawing in the margin at the right. (Image from BMArchives, accessed April 13, 2022, <https://bmaarchives.org/items/show/81797>, photo BMA QS-30.014.0037).

in Sumatra and was involved in important cartographic endeavors both in Sumatra and Borneo. After being awarded the knighthood of the *Militaire Willemsorde*, he got married at the end of 1852. He produced an important description of the island of Bangka, besides other ethnographic and archeological contributions. In 1857, he was promoted to the rank of a captain and made military commander of the *Zuid- en Ooster-Afdeeling* of Borneo, based in Banjarmasin.

Upon receiving intelligence of increasing unrest from Dayak or Banjarese informants, he warned of the impending uprising, asking for military reinforcement. The danger was minimized by the civil Resident, another German, resulting in severe conflict between the two men. When finally the uprising broke out in late April of 1859, troops were sent over from Java, and Colonel Andresen took over both the civil and military command. Hurt by the loss of his function, placed under the command of a junior officer, and suffering from severe health problems, Ullmann tried to obtain an honorable discharge or at least a leave, all without success.

In 1860 Ullmann took part in the “castigation” (*tuchtiging*) or “punitive expedition” under the new military commander Major G.M. Verspijck, which was undertaken in revenge for the humiliating destruction of a Dutch war ship ‘Onrust’ (which translates as ‘Unrest,’ an exceptional name for a ship). The major ordered: “Every Dayak or Malay showing evidence of complicity in the crime has to be put to death without mercy, every village in which any object from the Onrust was found, be laid in ashes. Only women and children should be spared.” Diaries of participants and contemporary reports amply document that the campaign took place accordingly, with countless burned villages and rice-fields, and summary executions of prisoners.

Skulls became thus available in great numbers, initially as trophies, for which the Dutch authorities offered fixed rewards, varying according to the wanted person. Soon, such skulls also came to meet the increasing demand for “race skulls,” which became popular in the Dutch East Indies for craniological studies. Major Verspijck, as a member of the Royal Naturalistic Association, was asked “to help the Association in obtaining skulls of known persons, stating their names, their place of birth, etc., and also to add some indications about the easiest way to remove the soft parts of skulls.”

Ullmann must have obtained his four skulls in 1860, since, having finally been granted his home leave, he left Borneo for Java around December 19, 1860. Unless the skulls were sent by someone else after his departure or were obtained in Java rather than directly in Borneo, we can therefore take the middle of December 1860 as the latest possible date for the death of these individuals.

“Anang”

Let us now have a closer look at one of the skulls, Nr. 43 on Ullmann’s list. The entry reads in German, “Anang. Malaijer geboren zu Tjoeboel (Bandjermassing) hatte theilgenommen am Mord der Europäer.” (“Anang. Malay born at Tjoeboel (Banjarmasin), had participated in the murder of the Europeans.”)

According to osteoanthropological research, he was male, 30–45 years old at the time of his death, of medium height (160.8 ± 7 cm). The skull vault is stained, apparently from dirt or blood, and there are remnants of grease on the skull base, indicating an insufficient, probably hasty preparation. There are various skeletal alterations probably associated with a weakened immune system due to nutritional deficiencies or chronic infections.

The most interesting information is found in Dutch handwriting on a piece of old paper glued on top of the skull: “Anang, born at Gunung Cubul above Sungai Raya, murderer of Andreas Jacob and participant in two attacks on Pengaron, faithful follower of Pambakal Aliakbar, Banjarese” [Fig. 2].⁴ A similar label is found on a second skull. The use of the Dutch language, content, and writing style all indicate that the label was written by a person habitually writing in Dutch. The content presupposes familiarity with the local situation and events. A native person would have written in Malay, the lingua franca generally used also to address Dutch colonial personnel. The handwriting is not Ullmann’s, and he would probably have used his native German to address persons in Gotha. The fact that the labels appear to have been written by another person might indicate that Ullmann did not take these two skulls from the site of the decapitation himself, but received them from another, probably Dutch, person.

Anang or *nanang* was originally a title for nobility in the Hindu Kingdom of Dipa Negara and the subsequent Islamic Sultanate of Banjar. Later it became a common nickname for boys among the Banjar people. In fact, several fighters called Anang are known from the early phase of the Banjar war.

Interestingly, the ethnic attribution “Bandjeres” is changed to “Malay” in the museum documents, following “racial” classification usage of the time. Gunung (“mountain”) Cubul, now called Bukit (“hill”) Cubul, is located in today’s Desa (“town”) Madurejo, in South Kalimantan. In 1859, the area was part of the region of Sungkai, over which Pambakal Ali Akbar, whom “Anang” was said to follow faithfully, was chief. Ali Akbar was among the main leaders of the massive assault on the fortified Oranje Nassau coal mine at Pengaron on April 28, 1859.

“Andreas,” the purported victim, was born around 1828. After the death of his Dayak mother, he was raised and adopted – along with his younger brother Jacob – by

J.H. Barnstein (1802–1863), the first Rheinisch missionary in Borneo. His Dayak name, Kedjang (meaning “stiff”), points to a somewhat difficult character. He became a missionary teacher and part-time trader, joined German explorer H. Von Gaffron (1813–1880) on his pioneering expedition in West Kalimantan in 1853, and finally became a writing clerk at the Kalangan mine. On May 3, Barnstein wrote in a letter what happened on April 28 or 29 after the attack on Pengaron: “24 Dayaks, who had taken Mohammedan wives there and lodged outside the fort, had joined the enemy. Our Andreas, Jacob’s brother, who supported himself by trade and wanted to come to Banjar anyway,⁵ had escaped with others just before the attack, but at Sungai Raya, 1 hour from Pengaron, they found the river blocked; the boats were examined, the Mohammedans were let through, but our Andreas, one of our baptized, confessed that he was a Christian. He was promised freedom if he would become a Mohamedan, the prayer formula was recited to him, but Andreas refused to repeat it. There he

was stabbed and is thus, as far as we know, the first blood witness of our community. His father was Chinese, his mother a Dayak. The matter is confirmed, because a Mohammedan woman, mother of Mr. Eman, has solemnly confessed this as an eyewitness here before the court.” In several other early reports, the name of the victim is given as “Jacob,” “Andreas Jacob,” or “Andries Jacob.” Whether Andreas used his younger brother’s name as a family name or he was simply being confused with Jacob, who lived outside of Pengaron, cannot be established based on available sources. Unfortunately, the court testimony mentioned by Barnstein could not be located. It might be hidden in military archives in Bandung, which remain inaccessible so far.

Although he was hailed as Borneo’s first martyr, on the memorial picture of the killed missionaries later published by the missionary society, his portrait is missing, as are those of the killed children. His death as “first blood-witness” in European-type clothing, being speared by an *olo Kajau* (headhunter), is represented only marginally in a vignette drawing as part of the frame for the main picture [Fig. 3]. In Gereja Kalimantan Evangelis, the region’s church that eventually grew as a late fruit of Rheinisch missionary activities, murdered German missionaries are remembered on certain festive days, while Andreas, the first martyr, remains entirely unknown.

On December 12, 1860, the newspaper *Java-bode* reported: “On November 26, five mutineers were hanged in Martapura, of whom two had participated in the murder of Mr. Jacob at Pengaron, and another, former watchman of Mr. Wijnmalen, who first took down the Dutch flag at the latter’s establishment. Now, everything here is quiet and peaceful, etc.”⁶ The latter deed is mentioned on the label on a second skull donated to Gotha together with Anang’s. Therefore, it can be assumed that this execution was the origin of at least these two skulls. The date of the hanging is two to three weeks before the latest possible date established above. Ullmann would thus have had time to get a hold of the skulls and have them prepared.

What we do not know is how and why he was able to obtain them. From other cases, it is known that local people brought the heads of enemies to military or civil authorities to prove their death, often to claim the head money, even for victims of an execution. Unfortunately, no other report confirming the newspaper article has turned up. Again, it would be most helpful to consult documents that remain inaccessible in the Indonesian military archives. Other possible sources of information might be found in letters, diaries, or personal memoirs by Ullmann, other participating soldiers, or surviving missionaries; in Banjarmasin archives; or in oral traditions of regional families.

To make the matter more complicated, another man said to be the killer of “Mr. Jacob” was caught together with five others in the wilderness near Sungai Raya on March 20, 1861: a certain Poe Said, Ali Akbar’s “infamous brother.”⁷ A month later, on April 26, five “mutineers” were hanged, among them a certain Kemis, watchman of Wijnmalen and murderer of Mr. Boodt at Kalangan, as well as “the presumed perpetrators of the murder of Mr. Andrias [sic] at Pengaron.” Whether any of these are identical with “Anang” cannot be determined; after all, 24 fighters were involved in the killing of Andreas, also known as Mr. Jacob. On October 9, 1861, Ali Akbar turned up in the Martapura region with 400 armed men “who had participated in the murder of Jacobs [sic].” If the skull brought to Gotha by Ullmann was from a man who died in 1861, it would have had to be sent to Europe rather than apprehended by Ullmann in the field, since he left Batavia for the Netherlands on March 18.

In Gotha, at the end of May 1864, “Anang’s” skull, together with the three others, was transferred from the “Art Cabinet” to the craniological collection of the “Natural History Cabinet.” There it was integrated into the *Sammlung Vierfüßler* (Collection of Quadrupeds) as *homo sapiens* together with the other mammals, in exchange for a number of ethnographic objects that did not fit the modern scientific specialization of the *Naturalienkabinett*. This recontextualization marked the shift of interest from individual war trophies to natural scientific, actually zoological, study objects. The rebel from Borneo had definitely lost the last traces of his obscured identity, much as his purported victim, the forgotten martyr.

What this case study illustrates is that provenance research into museum collections can unravel much more than just one particular history. Not only is there information found about the skull and its specific historical context, but also about collection practices in general, about repression and extreme violence in a colonial context, about processes of forgetting and remembering, and about changing meanings and contextualizations of these skulls. Finally, it reminds us of the presence of human remains and skull collections, not only in formerly colonizing countries and established anatomical collections, but also in other countries and collections.

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Notes

- 1 Provenance and history of the collection of Indonesian skulls of the Schloss Friedenstien Gotha Foundation, project KK_LA09_II2020 (www.kulturgutverluste.de and www.proveana.de). Information not referenced here is from unpublished archival sources for this project, planned to be completed by May 2022. See also www.friedenstien.eu/human-remains
- 2 Erroneously for Kalangan
- 3 Banjarmasin on Borneo’s south coast, capital of the sultanate and main Dutch colonial center
- 4 “Anang geb. te Goenoeng Tjoeboel boven Soengei Raja, moordenaar van Andreas Jacob en deelnemer aan twee aanvallen op Pengaron trouwe volgeling van den muiteling Pembekkel Aliakbar. Bandjeres”. Pambakal (Banjarese), Pamakal (Dayak), Pembekal (Malay) or Pembekkel (Dutch) is a term for a village chief.
- 5 Several newspaper reports state that “Andreas Jacob” was sent to bring news of the attack to Banjarmasin.
- 6 “Den 26sten November heeft men te Martapoera vijf muitelingen opgehangen, van wie twee deel hadden genomen aan den moord op den Heer Jacob te Pengaron, en een ander, gewezen oppasser van den Heer Wijnmalen, die het eerst de Hollandsche vlag bij diens établissement naar beneden rukte. Thans is hier alles stil en rustig, enz.”
- 7 I thank Mansyur M.Si., M.Hum in Banjarmasin for some of the information in this paragraph.